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SUBJECT: Initial Meeting of Services and Technology Joint Coordination Committee

REF: A)BAGHDAD 00297, B)BAGHDAD 00399

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED - PLEASE HANDLE ACCORDINGLY

SUMMARY

¶11. (SBU) The Co-Chairs of the Services and Information Technology Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) agreed to launch the work of the Committee under the Strategic Framework Agreement. In a meeting on February 14, Deputy Prime Minister Rafae al-Essawi and EMIN Wall, Coordinator for Economic Transition in Iraq (CETI), agreed to convene a full JCC meeting in mid-March, and to direct the working groups (WG) to meet in the meantime to inventory programs that are applicable to the objectives of the Strategic Framework Agreement (SFA), define their respective work plans and agree upon achievable near-term deliverable goals. DPM Essawi stressed the practical importance of reconciling the language of the SFA to existing strategic visions within the ministries that comprise the six WGs.
END SUMMARY.

DPM Essawi's Framework

¶12. (SBU) DPM Essawi agreed to the Embassy's suggested six sub-committee level Working Group structure: Health; Agriculture; Transportation; Electricity and Essential Services; Information Technology; and Communications and Environment. Essawi announced his preference to have the Government of Iraq ministries assigned to the Working Groups (WG) meet first to identify how SFA goals mesh with individual ministerial strategies and document reasonable deliverables and work plans. DPM Essawi requested that the ministries complete their tasks by early March. As a first step he urged each USG and Iraqi WG co-chairs to meet informally with their counterparts. Co-Chairs agreed to meet before February 20 with an initial WG meeting by Feb 26. The Co-Chairs agreed that both sides should review existing programs and projects that fit within SFA goals and adopt them into their respective SFA deliverables inventory.

Trade Delegation and the DEC

¶13. (SBU) DPM Essawi expressed keen interest to engage with the new U.S. administration and raised again the prospect of leading a trade delegation to the U.S. in March (ref A). EMIN informed him that Embassy Baghdad had endorsed the trade delegation idea, although March may not give the new administration time necessary to fill all the sub-cabinet posts by then. DPM Essawi also asked that another Dialogue on Economic Cooperation (DEC) be convened as soon as practicable, suggesting April. But EMIN again cautioned that the American side may not be fully organized within that time frame. As an aside, the DPM said that he was holding the trade delegation out as an inducement to ministers to participate personally and enthusiastically in the work of the JCC. (Note: DPM Barham Salih made a similar request, see ref B.)

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